

### **Abstract**

The invention discloses MMP7 as a suitable target for the development of new therapeutics to treat or ameliorate chronic pain. The invention relates to methods to treat and/or ameliorate chronic pain and pharmaceutical compositions therefor comprising modulators with inhibitory effect on MMP7 enzyme activity and/or MMP7 gene expression. The invention also relates to a method to identify compounds with therapeutic usefulness to treat chronic pain, comprising identifying compounds that can inhibit MMP7 activity and/or gene expression, which can also reverse the pathological effects of chronic pain in vivo.